

Transforming Washington Communities

Grant County Community Transformation Grant Success Story

Quincy Safe Routes to School:

There are many issues affecting the health of Quincy residents. The City of Quincy is home to 7,000 people where 30 percent live in poverty, 74.3 percent are Hispanic, and 38.7 percent of the adult population does not have a high school diploma. The Quincy Wellness Advisory Committee (the committee) was deeply concerned about the safety of the children walking and biking to school from neighborhoods within city limits. The committee joined with the Grant County Health District to develop a plan for Safe Routes to School.

Health District staff have a wealth of experience in Safe Routes to School work. They assisted in organizing city residents from both the Hispanic and non-Hispanic populations to document safety concerns and hazards along walking routes of all schools, to create a plan, apply for a grant, and implement the plan.

Grant County Health District facilitated local teams of parents, school officials, traffic safety, Safe Kids Grant County, city planners, the Washington State Department of Transportation, city leadership, and public health to conduct two walking audits. They determined the best walking and biking routes according to audit findings. Health District staff used a walking audit tool they had adapted from existing tools to fit the rural and unique characteristics of Grant County cities.

Approved routes were presented in mapping brochures to the Quincy School District Board in both English and Spanish. The Board adopted the maps and provided them to Quincy families. The Safe Routes to School team received a \$350,000 grant to fund a formal walk/bike path in place of the worn dirt trail that connects 460 students directly with their neighborhood school. Once the trail is complete, these students will no longer receive bussing services.

With the help of the Safe Routes to School Grant, the Quincy School District hired a new transportation director. The Quincy Safe Routes to School team remains involved in implementation, and is working closely with the new director. Additional signs, safety precautions, and educational strategies appropriate for the culture were also implemented to assure that parents feel safe allowing their children to walk to school.